

Northwest Voice For Christ Ministries
 "An Interdenominational Church"

503-286-1103



Pastor & Elect Lady
Bishop H. L. & Earlean P. Hodge
 Pastor/Teacher/Revivalist

Worship Services:

Sundays: Church School—9:00 A.M.

Morning Worship—10:00 A.M.

Seminars: Bible Themes—Wednesdays—7:00 P.M.
 "God The Father"; "God The Son"; and "God The Holy Spirit"

Bishop Hodge and Congregation invite you to join us at our appointment with Jesus.

We Reach, Teach, & Preach in Jesus' name!!!

Location: To Be Announced

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Modern Day Slavery

continued **▲** from front

"After a while, the experience of normal consensual sex isn't enough," says Smith, who represented southwest Washington as a Republican congresswoman in the mid and late 1990s.

"Some people really believe it's a prevalent problem here in Oregon because we have a very liberal [state] constitution regarding freedom of speech," said Portland City Commissioner Dan Saltzman, citing the high number of strip clubs in the city.

Smith says that some of those venues are harboring minors.

Though fewer minors are prostituting themselves on the streets than ever before, they are not disappearing altogether. They are now on Craigslist.

"It's just less visible to the public," says Dooley.

Regardless of how it's happening, the big problem is breaking the spell pimps put on their victims.

"They're not using alcohol and drugs," says Deputy Keith Bickford, director of the Oregon Human Trafficking Task Force. "They're brainwashing these girls to believe they love this pimp. [The pimp] courts them and gives them the things they're

not getting from their parents."

A pimp is a skilled psychological manipulator, leading a girl to believe that he is her boyfriend. Soon, he will start to drop hints that money is tight, and if they want to stay together, they'll have to do something. The pimp will then introduce the girl to another man, a "friend" who has promised to pay them a lot of money if he can sleep with her just this once.

Unaware that this "friend" is actually a john, she will agree to have sex with him under the impression that it is a one-time thing. But this one-time thing quickly turns into a regular thing, and before long, the pimp will introduce the girl to other girls who are doing the same thing for him—but he'll convince her that she's the only girl he really loves.

Underprivileged girls are not the sole victims of domestic minor sex trafficking. Pimps pander to runaway girls from the suburbs who are unhappy at home, buying cell phones and jewelry and feigning deep affection for their prey.

While Dooley was 16 when she was first trafficked, she says nowadays the average age of entry into "the business" is 13 years old.

In Portland, pimps sometimes poach girls at malls, and quickly put them up for business at nearby hotels.

Once a girl has fallen into prostitution, it's hard to get her out.

"It takes a lot to deprogram a victim, and you can't do that when they're brainwashed to go back to their pimp," says Michelle Bart, co-chair of the Northwest Coalition Against Trafficking.

Meanwhile, even if they were clean prior to entering the business, sex trafficking victims often will often turn to drugs in an attempt to numb their pain and disgust. Many were also molested as children.

Trafficked girls are often picked up on drug or shoplifting charges, making it hard to identify them as victims, according to Andrew Olsen, policy analyst for Multnomah County Commissioner Diane McKeel.

Advocates say a shelter is essential to addressing the problem. Brainwashed victims can be viewed as mentally ill persons who pose a danger to themselves, so they can be locked up after being put through a civil commitment process. This arrangement would essentially be a

more humane form of imprisonment, but according to Portland City Commissioner Amanda Fritz.

"Once they get there they appreciate the security," she said.

Thanks to the efforts of McKeel and Sen. Ron Wyden, Oregon has been issued a half-million dollar federal grant to build a shelter that would house and rehabilitate domestic minor sex trafficking victims. One agency that has proposed a shelter option is the Portland YWCA.

An effective shelter would not only function as a safe house, but also offer drug therapy to overcome addiction, education to work towards a GED, and counseling to cope with post-traumatic stress disorder.

The shelter would be at least be partially staffed by sex trafficking survivors since girls are most likely to recover with help from "someone who's actually been in their stiletos," says Dooley.

"When you get the help that you need, you start to see that possibilities are endless," says Jeri Sundvall-Williams, a local activist who once walked the streets, adding that most of her survivor friends have gone onto careers in community organizing or social work.

In Portland, the anti-domestic minor sex trafficking movement is gaining momentum, with government, non-profit organizations and faith-based groups working in tandem to solve a problem plaguing this city.

"The challenge is making sure it's not like herding cats, because there are so many organizations that want to do something," says Saltzman.

"It's not okay for anybody to turn their backs on children who are being sold on the streets," says Fritz, whose zeal is partly due to the "daily issues of gender bias" that she says she confronts as only the seventh woman to serve on Portland's City Council in 150 years.

Saltzman, too, has a personal connection to this issue. Glancing at one of many pictures of his daughter throughout his office, he imagines the terror he might feel if she were trafficked.



Then the usually soft-spoken commissioner raises his voice.

"It's something that we have to face up to," he says. "There's too many young girls whose futures are being sacrificed by our ignorance."

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